

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST

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dusty tombs on the yellow hillside by Tanagra,
 with the faint
 gold and the fading crimson still lingering about
 hair and lips
 and raiment. On a wall of fresh plaster, stained
 with bright
 sandyx or mixed with milk and saffron, he
 pictured one who
 trod with tired feet the purple white-starred fields
 of asphodel,
 one "in whose eyelids lay the whole of the
 Trojan War/
 Polyxena, the daughter of Priam; or figured
 Odysseus, the wise
 and cunning, bound by tight cords to the mast-
 step, that he
 might listen without hurt to the singing of the
 Sirens, or wander-
 ing by the clear river of Acheron, where the
 ghosts of fishes
 flitted over the pebbly bed; or showed the Persian
 in trows and
 mitre flying before the Greek at Marathon, or the
 galleys clashing
 their beaks of brass in the little Salaminian bay.
 He drew with
 silver-point and charcoal upon parchment and
 prepared cedar.
 Upon ivory and rose-coloured terracotta he
 painted with wax,
 making the wax fluid with juice of olives, and
 with heated
 irons making it firm. Panel and marble and linen
 canvas became
 wonderful as his brush swept across them; and
 life seeing her
 own image, was still, and dared not speak. All life,
 indeed, was
 his, from the merchants seated in the market-
 place to the
 cloaked shepherd lying on the hill; from the
 nymph hidden in
 the laurels and the faun that pipes at noon, to
 the king whom,
 in long green-curtained litter, slaves bore upon
 oil-bright
 shoulders, and fanned with peacock fans. Men
 and women,
 with pleasure or sorrow in their faces, passed
 before him. He
 watched them, and their secret became his.
 Through form and
 colour he re-created a world.
 All subtle arts belonged to him also. He held the
 gem against
 the revolving disk, and the amethyst became the
 purple couch
 for Adonis, and across the veined sardonyx sped
 Artemis with
 her hounds. He beat out the gold into roses, and
 strung them
 together for necklace or armlet. He beat out the
 gold into
 wreaths for the conqueror's helmet, or into
 palmates for the
 Tyrian robe, or into masks for the royal dead.
 On the back
 of the silver mirror he graved Thetis borne by her
 Nereids, or
 love-sick Phaedra with her nurse, or Persephone,
 weary of
 memory, putting poppies in her hair. The potter
 sat in his
 shed, and, flower-like from the silent wheel, the
 vase rose up
 beneath his hands. He decorated the base and
 stem and ears
 with pattern of dainty olive-leaf, or foliated
 acanthus, or curved
 and crested wave. Then in black or red he painted

lads wrestling,
 or in the race: knights in full armour, with
 strange heraldic
 shields and curious visors, leaning from shell-
 shaped chariot